

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1        1.     A method of providing a multimedia conference between a plurality of  
2 user devices over a network, comprising:
  - 3                identifying information services to be provided to at least one of the  
4 plurality of user devices during the multimedia conference; and
  - 5                providing multimedia conference signals to the at least one of the plurality  
6 of user devices, wherein the multimedia conference signals include the identified  
7 information services.
- 1        2.     The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - 2                receiving start-up signals from one of the plurality of user devices;
  - 3                sending start-up requests to the others of the plurality of user devices; and
  - 4                receiving start-up signals from each of the others of the plurality of user  
5 devices in response to the start-up requests,
    - 6                wherein the start-up signals include information for the identifying of the  
7 information services to be provided to the at least one of the plurality of user devices.
- 1        3.     The method of claim 1, wherein at least two of the plurality of user devices  
2 request different information services, and
  - 3                wherein providing multimedia conference signals comprises sending multimedia  
4 conference signals that selectively include the requested information services to each of  
5 the at least two of the plurality of user devices.
- 1        4.     The method of claim 3, further comprising:
  - 2                determining whether the information services of the at least two of the plurality  
3 of user devices are to be provided continuously or non-continuously, and
  - 4                wherein providing the multimedia conference signals further comprises at least  
5 one of continuously and non-continuously including the requested information services in  
6 the multimedia conference signals.
- 1        5.     The method of claim 4, wherein the start-up signals include information  
2 for determining whether the information services are to be provided continuously or non-  
3 continuously.

1       6.     The method of claim 4, further comprising:  
2           determining one of the plurality of user devices to be a speaker of the multimedia  
3 conference; and

4           discontinuing information services to any of the at least two of the plurality of  
5 user devices that requests non-continuous information services and that is determined to  
6 be the speaker.

1       7.     The method of claim 3, wherein sending multimedia conference signals  
2 that include the requested information services comprises at least one of sending real-time  
3 information from a service provider to the respective end user and sending stored  
4 information from a database to the respective end user.

1       8.     The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
2           receiving a request from a user device to change the information for the  
3 identifying of the information service to be provided to the respective user device.

1       9.     The method of claim 3, wherein sending multimedia conference signals  
2 that selectively include the requested information services comprises providing the  
3 requested information services as at least one of superimposed text, a banner, a split-  
4 screen, and a picture-in-picture.

1       10.    A communication apparatus for providing a multimedia conference  
2 between a plurality of user devices over a network, comprising:

3           a controller; and

4           a memory, wherein the controller identifies information services to be  
5 provided to at least one of the plurality of user devices during the multimedia conference  
6 and provides multimedia conference signals to the at least one of the plurality of user  
7 devices, wherein the multimedia conference signals include the identified information  
8 services.

1       11.    The communication apparatus of claim 10, wherein the controller receives  
2 start-up signals from one of the plurality of user devices, sends start-up requests to others  
3 of the plurality of user devices, and receives start-up signals from each of the others of the  
4 plurality of user devices in response to the start-up requests, and wherein the start-up  
5 signals include information for identifying the information services to be provided to the  
6 at least one of the plurality of user devices.

1           12. The communication apparatus of claim 10, wherein at least two of the  
2 plurality of user devices request different information services, and wherein the controller  
3 sends multimedia conference signals that selectively include the requested information  
4 services to each of the at least two of the plurality of user devices.

1           13. The communication apparatus of claim 12, wherein the controller  
2 determines whether the information services of the at least two of the plurality of user  
3 devices are to be provided continuously or non-continuously and provides the information  
4 services in the multimedia conference signals in accordance with the determination.

1           14. The communication apparatus of claim 13, wherein the start-up signals  
2 include information for determining whether the information services are to be provided  
3 continuously or non-continuously.

1           15. The communication apparatus of claim 13, wherein the controller  
2 determines one of the plurality of user devices to be a speaker of the multimedia  
3 conference and discontinues information services to any of the at least two of the plurality  
4 of user devices that requests non-continuous information services and that is determined  
5 to be the speaker.

1           16. The communication apparatus of claim 12, wherein the multimedia  
2 conference signals that include the requested information services comprise at least one  
3 of real-time information from a service provider and stored information from a database

1           17. The communication apparatus of claim 11, wherein the controller receives  
2 a request from a user device to change the information for identifying the information  
3 service to be provided to the respective user device.

1           18. The communication apparatus of claim 12, wherein the controller provides  
2 the requested information services as at least one of superimposed text, a banner, a split-  
3 screen, and a picture-in-picture.